His Majesties

(21)

MOST GRACIOUS

SPEECH

To both HOUSES of

PARLIAMENT,

On *Thursday* the Twenty first Day of *November*, 1717.

G. R.

LONDON,

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His MAJESTIES *most Gracious* SPEECH *to both Houſes of Parliament, on* Thurſday *the Twenty firſt Day of* November, 1717.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I Am very glad I have been able to bring the Sitting of Parliament into a more proper and uſual Seaſon of the Year: I hope ſuch an early Meeting will not only be a Benefit to the Publick, but a Convenience to your Private Affairs.

As I have always had at heart the Security and Eaſe of My People; ſo I never kept up any Troops but for their Protection, and have taken every Opportunity to Diſband as many as I thought conſiſtent with their Safety. I have Reduced the Army to very near one half ſince the Beginning of the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, and Leſſened them to ſuch a Number, as will neither be a Burthen to My good Subjects, nor an Encouragement to Our Enemies to Inſult them.

You cannot but be Senſible of the many Attempts which have been ſet on foot to diſturb the Peace of *Europe*, and of theſe Kingdoms: They only pretend not to ſee, who are not afraid of them. But as no Application has been wanting on My Part to Preſerve the Publick Tranquillity; I have the Pleaſure to find My good Offices have not been altogether Unſucceſsful, and have Reaſon to hope they will, in the End, have their full and deſired Effect.

Gentlemen of the Houſe of Commons,

I Queſtion not but you are very well pleaſed to find, that your Endeavours for Leſſening the National Debts, have at the ſame time raiſed the Publick Credit; and that whatever was propoſed for that End, is actually and completely effected. This Succeſs muſt chiefly be Attributed to that juſt and prudent Regard you have ſhewn to Parliamentary Engagements.

It was with the View of Procuring and Settling a laſting Tranquillity, that I Demanded the Extraordinary Supply which you granted Me laſt Seſſion. The Credit which this Confidence repoſed in Me hath given Us Abroad, has already been ſo far effectual, that I can acquaint you We have a much better Proſpect than We

had. I have ordered an Account to be laid before you of the very ſmall Part of that Supply which as yet has been expended; any farther Iſſues that may be made of it ſhall be alſo laid before you: And you may be aſſured, that every Part of it ſhall either be employ'd for your Service, or ſaved to the Publick.

I have ordered to be laid before you a State of the Deficiencies of the preſent Year, and the ſeveral Eſtimates for the Service of the next, which you will find conſiderably diminiſh'd. I rely upon your making the neceſſary Proviſion for them; not doubting of the Continuance of that Zeal for the Good of your Country, which hath been ſo eminently Conſpicuous in every Seſſion of this Parliament.

I cannot, in Juſtice, avoid putting you in mind, that ſeveral Arrears of Pay and Subſidy, incurred before My Acceſſion to the Crown, are Claimed by Foreign Princes and States: I ſhall order them to be laid before you, to the End you may put them in a Method to be Examined and Stated; which will very much tend to the Eaſe and Benefit of the Nation.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I cannot but obſerve to you, that at a time when the Common Enemies of the Proteſtant Religion, by the Deſperate Practices of Artifices, endeavouring to Undermine and Weaken it both at Home and Abroad, all [illegible] are Friends to Our preſent Happy Eſtabliſhment, might unanimouſly concur in ſome proper Method for the greater Strengthning the Proteſtant Intereſt; of which, as the Church of *England* is unqueſtionably the main Support and Bulwark, ſo will She reap the principal Benefit of every Advantage accruing by the Union and mutual Charity of all Proteſtants.

As none can recommend themſelves more effectually to My Favour and Countenance than by a ſincere Zeal for the Juſt Rights of the Crown, and the Liberties of the People; ſo I am determined to Encourage all thoſe who act agreeably to the Conſtitution of theſe My Kingdoms, and conſequently to the Principles on which My Government is founded.

The Eyes of all *Europe* are upon you at this Critical Juncture: It is your Intereſt, for which Reaſon I think it Mine, that My Endeavours for Procuring the Peace and Quiet of Chriſtendom ſhould take Effect. Nothing can ſo much contribute to this deſirable End, as the Unanimity, Diſpatch, and Vigour of your Reſolutions for the Support of My Government.

F I N I S.